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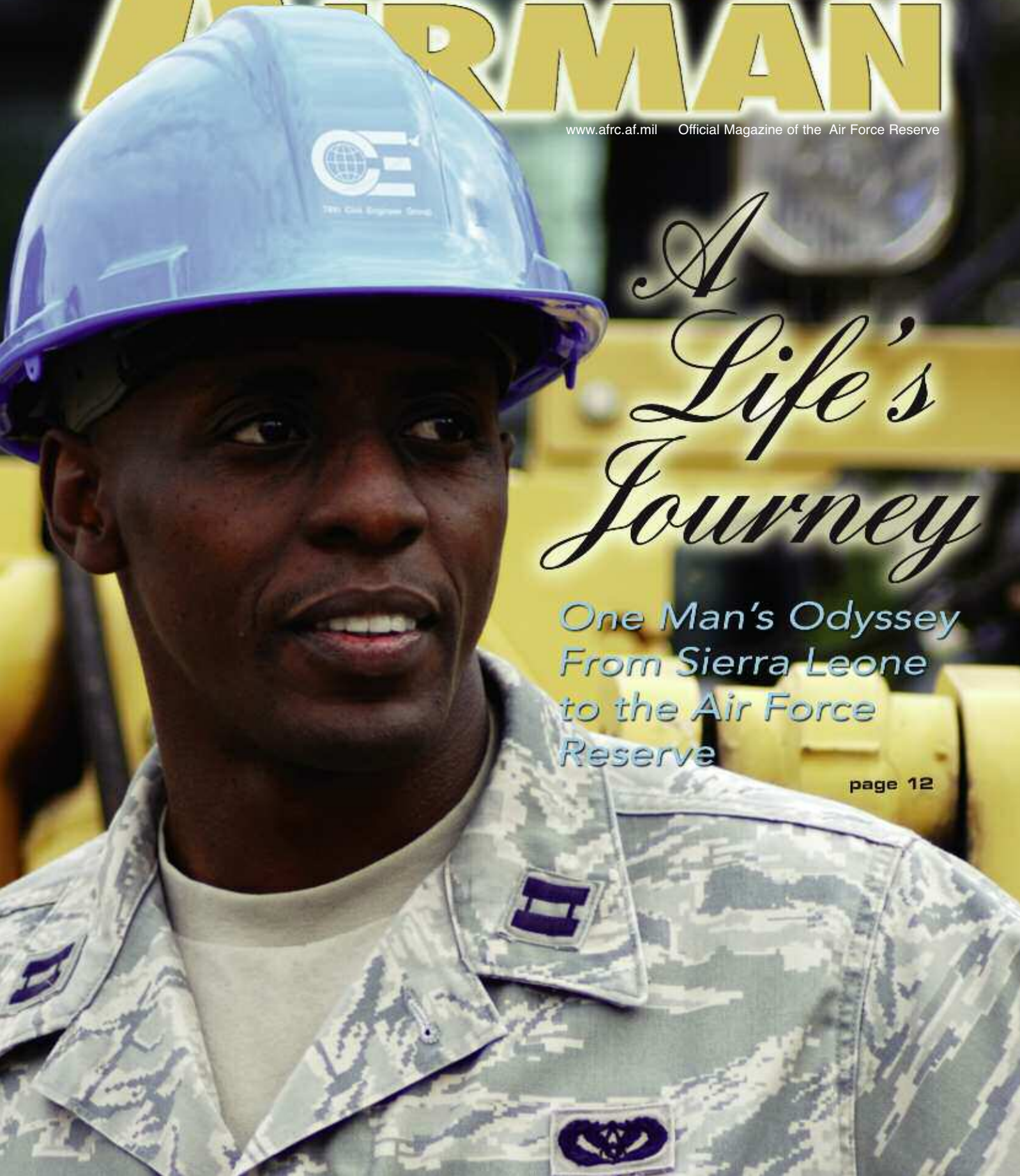
# AIRMAN Citizen

www.afrc.af.mil Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

## *A Life's Journey*

*One Man's Odyssey  
From Sierra Leone  
to the Air Force  
Reserve*

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FROM THE TOP



By Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson  
Commander,  
Air Force Reserve Command

## What Doesn't Change in Changing Times? Your Dedication

The year 2013 was a fiscal roller coaster with continuing resolutions, sequestration, furloughs and a government shut-down. Although the future is unpredictable, the ups and downs are probably not over. Tough budget challenges will likely continue in 2014.

The future of the Air Force Reserve will be shaped by these budget decisions. Influencing the decisions are several studies regarding the composition of the reserve component and the Air Force, including the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force.

Congress established the commission to "undertake a comprehensive study of the structure of the Air Force to determine whether, and how, the structure should be modified to best fulfill current and anticipated mission requirements in a manner consistent with available resources." The commission will submit its final report and recommendations to the president and Congress in early 2014.

Members of the commission are seeking input from our Citizen Airmen. They have met with many Airmen during unit visits, from breakfasts with our younger members to commander briefings and local hearings. Chief Kirksey and I have had the privilege of testifying before the commission a combined total of four times since June. The commission is examining how potential changes could affect how our Citizen Airmen serve. When Chief Kirksey and I were asked questions about our men and women, we highlighted your commitment to serve, not only since 9/11, but throughout the Air Force Reserve's 65-year history.

Your "service before self" attitude is unwavering. More than three-fourths of you joined the Air Force Reserve since 9/11, demonstrating your desire to serve in today's fast-paced operational environment. Half of all Citizen Airmen served in the military prior to 9/11, most as active-duty members, indicating not just your experience, but your long-term commitment. Our average retention rate over the past seven years is around 90 percent, further demonstrating your desire to stay and serve. These statistics are only a glimpse into your dedication to our country and our Air Force, which is not taken lightly.

As we look to the future, our focus needs to remain on ways to make it easier for Citizen Airmen to serve. Predictability is key, as Chief Kirksey addresses in his commentary. Predictability can help Citizen Airmen maintain their "Reserve-Work-Life balance" by increasing notice times for employers and planning time for family obligations. Some ways we're seeking to increase predictive use of the reserve component include closer alignment with future combatant commander requirements, refinements to the mobilization process and better processes to capture our Citizen Airmen's desire to volunteer.

We can never predict the future, but we can seek an improved steady-state use of our Air Force Reserve in order to match the steadfast dedication of our Citizen Airmen throughout these changing times.

Your continued commitment is one reason I say, "Thanks for all you do!"

CHIEF'S VIEW



By Chief Master Sgt. Cameron B. Kirksey  
Command Chief Master Sergeant,  
Air Force Reserve Command

## Increased Predictability Linked to Higher Morale

"Whether Reserve, Guard or active duty, when making proposed changes, we must be aware of the impact to our Airmen's lives and families. They are our most important resource."

I offered this viewpoint in my opening statement during a recent hearing conducted by the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. The commission also heard from the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and the Command Chief of the Air National Guard. As Lieutenant General Jackson discusses in his "View from the Top," the commission is examining several options regarding our force structure. My testimony focused on the potential impacts these options may have on our Airmen.

Morale of our Airmen is a key concern of the commission. When asked for my perspective, I stressed the importance of predictability. Predictability has many facets, but recent budget uncertainty has made this harder to achieve. The stress of financial unknowns tests the resiliency of our Airmen and their families. This is one example where predictability and morale are tightly linked. By seeking ways to increase the certainty in the lives of our Airmen, we can achieve higher morale.

Increased predictability benefits our Airmen in several ways, both for deployments and when volunteering to serve. With advanced notice, families and employers can better prepare for our time away. Families are provided longer transition time. Employers are more capable of making alternate arrangements during our absence, which aids in long-term employer relations. Predictable schedules also allow for increased opportunities to attend valuable programs like Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events. Yellow Ribbon is a great resource to ease deployment transitions for our Citizen Airmen and their families, another important factor in morale and a key concern of the commission.

Despite future challenges, rest assured that I will continue to advocate for the morale, health and welfare of America's finest Citizen Airmen: you and your families. I appreciate your dedicated service and the sacrifices you make for your country. Bottom line: General Jackson and I don't take these for granted.

As we enter the holiday season, know you are a valued and an important member of the Air Force Reserve family. Please pass on my sincere gratitude to your families, as they continue to take care of the home front while you are away, whether for a unit training assembly weekend or a long deployment.

Enjoy the well-deserved downtime with family and friends. I ask that you remember our brothers and sisters who are in harm's way. For those who are traveling, safe travels. Continue being the great wingmen that you are by looking out for one another. You are our most valued resource!

I'm here for you!





Senior Master Sgt. Glenn Matthijs, 514th Civil Engineer Squadron, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., sets up an auto level while surveying his Innovative Readiness Training team's construction site at Riverside Christian Academy in Tennessee. The device is used for shooting angles and checking elevation during the site layout process. The team of Reserve civil engineers was completing a soccer field at the school. For more on the Reserve's IRT program, see the story on Page 20. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)

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**Immigrant gives back to adopted country through his military service**

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On the cover: In 1997, 23-year-old Bernard Wesley and his family began a long journey from their home in war-torn Sierra Leone to the United States. Today, as a captain in the Air Force Reserve and a U.S. citizen, Wesley is proudly giving back to the country that has given so much to him and his family. Read his remarkable story on Page 12. (Bo Joyner)

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# In Focus

Photos from around the Air Force Reserve



Tech. Sgt. Wade Wittrock, 302nd Logistics Readiness Squadron noncommissioned officer of fuel operations, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., runs the 60-foot fuel hose out from a fuel truck for a checkpoint inspection. This is one of many daily inspections performed to make sure the R-11 trucks are mechanically and operationally ready to go at a moment's notice. (Staff Sgt. Nathan Federico)

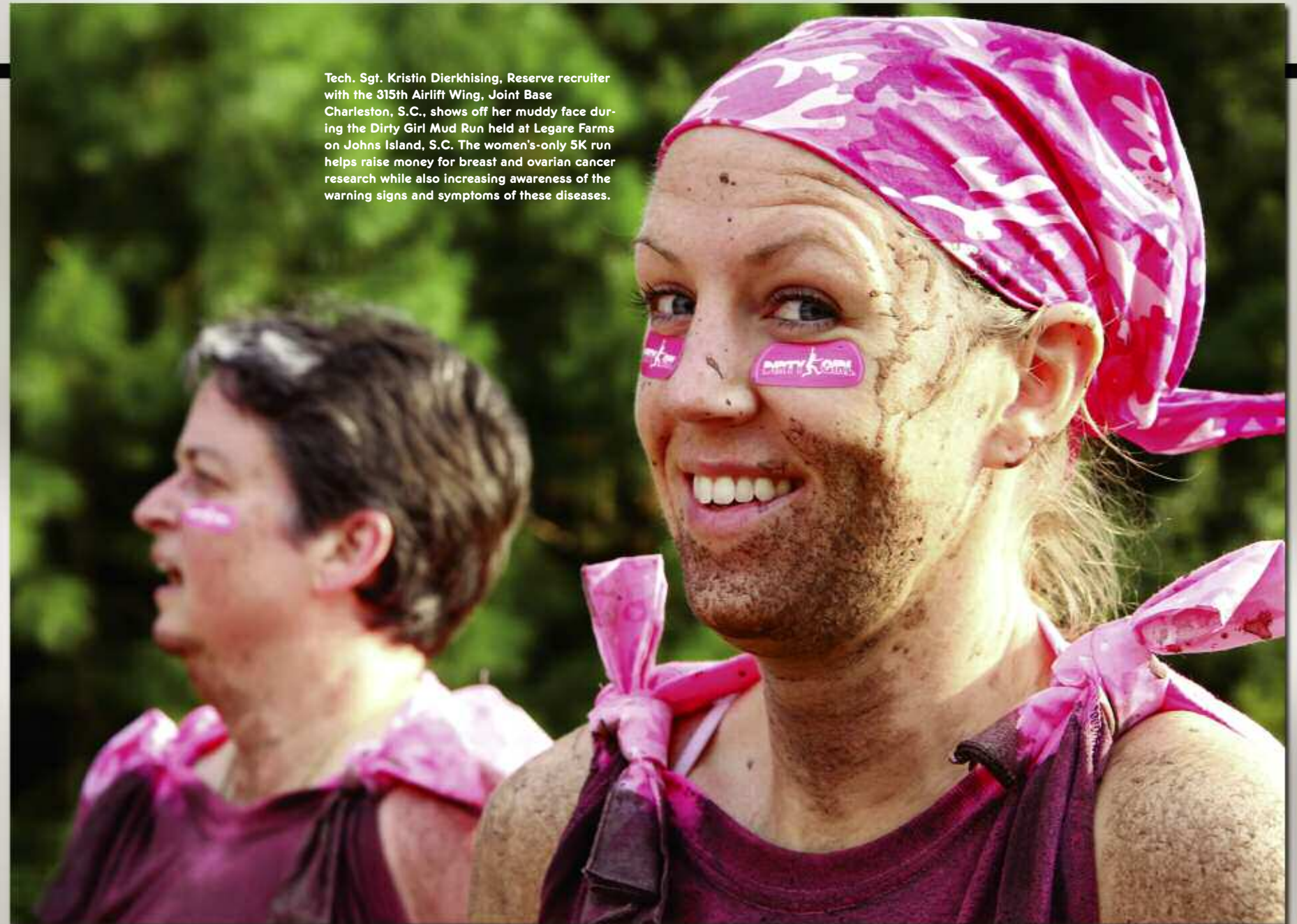
Master Sgt. Roberto Muniz, 482nd Fighter Wing weapons loader, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., wires the guidance portion of a GBU-12 bomb on an F-16 Fighting Falcon during Operation Green Flag. (Tech. Sgt. Lou Burton)



Tech. Sgt. Casey Hall, a boom operator for the 459th Air Refueling Wing at Joint Base Andrews, Md., smiles at his daughter who was on hand to welcome him home from an overseas deployment. Hall, along with other members of the wing, was deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Staff Sgt. Katie Spencer)



Tech. Sgt. Kristin Dierkhising, Reserve recruiter with the 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, S.C., shows off her muddy face during the Dirty Girl Mud Run held at Legare Farms on Johns Island, S.C. The women's-only 5K run helps raise money for breast and ovarian cancer research while also increasing awareness of the warning signs and symptoms of these diseases.



Air Force Reservist and 920th Rescue Wing pararescue jumper Staff Sgt. Brandon Foreshaw follows fellow PJ Master Sgt. Blain Morgan out of a wing HC-130P/N King aircraft during a training jump over Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. (Staff Sgt. Katie Spencer)



# ROUND THE RESERVE

## Barksdale Says Goodbye to Fighter Group

After 50 years of operation, the 917th Fighter Group was inactivated during a ceremony at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., Sept. 26.

The ceremony marked the end of an era at Barksdale, as Airmen and community members gathered in the 917th FG hangar to watch as the unit guidon was furled and cased.

“What a glorious day to honor 50 years of the 917th’s service to our nation,” said Col. John Breazeale, 917th FG commander. “We wrap up 50 years of 917th service to our nation by honoring the thousands of 917th Airmen for their service and the proud heritage and legacy they built. Today is about

you and your contribution to our nation.”

The inactivation was part of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

“We honor the legacy of the 917th Air Transportation Group, 917th Special Operations Group, 917th Tactical Fighter Group, 917th Tactical Fighter Wing and, finally, the 917th Fighter Group,” Breazeale said. “We honor the 917th FG Airmen who deployed for Operations Deny Flight, Decisive Edge, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and their role in saving or protecting Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and special operations.”

The unit’s milestones include:

- The 917th FG was originally formed as the 917th Troop Carrier Group on Jan. 17, 1963, at

Barksdale and was assigned to the 435th Troop Carrier Wing. Its mission was to administer and support its assigned 78th Troop Carrier Squadron, which was equipped with C-124 aircraft.

- When the A-37B Dragonfly was eventually phased out, the group converted to the A-10 Thunderbolt II airframe. The 917 TFG assumed replacement-training responsibilities on Oct. 1, 1983. This ultimately led to the creation of the 46th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, in addition to the 926th Tactical Fighter Group in New Orleans.

- On Oct. 1, 1993, the 917th became the first unit in Air Force Reserve history to acquire a strategic mission: B-52H Stratofortress aircraft were added to the wing make-up, and the 93rd Bomb

## Alaska F-22 pilot develops new fighter deployment strategy

By Capt. Ashley Conner

An Air Force Reserve F-22 pilot at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, is credited with developing a new strategy for deploying fighter aircraft.

The usual method of deploying fighters is structured around sending large footprint packages to a select few operating bases. Lt. Col. Kevin Sutterfield of the 477th Fighter Group challenged that way of thinking by developing a new rapid response force deployment concept.

“This concept emphasizes the fundamental tenants of airpower — speed, flexibility and surprise — by pairing smaller formations of fighters and airlifters that can move quickly together and operate from unexpected locations,” Sutterfield said.

After penning a white paper that circulated through the Pentagon and combatant command staffs, Sutterfield partnered with active-duty and Reserve combat air forces experts to further flush out the strategy’s details.

“Pilots from the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron and the U.S. Air Force Weapons School (both at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.), and the Air Force chief of staff’s Strategic Studies Group played important roles in making this a reality,” Sutterfield said. “We determined we needed to find a way to quickly generate and move small cells of fifth-generation jets. ... keep them moving, refueling and rearming for a 72-hour cycle.”

To test these theories, experienced pilots and maintainers from the 3rd Wing, an active-duty unit at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, and the 477th FG developed exercises in 2009, 2010 and 2012.

The events enabled pilots and maintainers to



**A fuels specialist awaits the arrival of 3rd Wing F-22s to begin refueling. The newest strategy in fighter employment enables combat-ready F-22s to rapidly refuel, rearm and redeploy in record time. Lt. Col. Kevin Sutterfield, a Reserve F-22 pilot assigned to the 477th Fighter Group at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, developed the new concept.**

develop innovative tactics and practice under realistic combat stresses. In one example, F-22s from JB ER executed a practice strike on targets in the Atlantic Ocean by flying very nearly over the North Pole. It demonstrated the strategic location of Alaska and the ability for airpower to hold targets at risk from great distances.

“This concept decreases the logistical burden of deploying a fighter squadron and aircraft maintenance unit and instead uses a flexible combination of four F-22s, one C-17, a tailored maintenance package and trained personnel to quickly project airpower anywhere on the globe,” said Lt. Col. Robert Davis, former commander of the 525th Fighter Squadron at JB ER and current Air War

College student, who played an integral role in making this concept a reality for the F-22s.

After several successful exercises, the concept is now an operational reality.

“The concept of this rapid fighter response and its successful demonstration are the result of the synergies available when the active and reserve components work together in leveraging their corresponding strengths,” said Col. Tyler Otten, 477th FG commander. “Sutterfield’s experience, longevity as a Reservist and innovative thought were the genesis of this idea that we were able to execute as Reserve and active mission partners.” ★

(Conner is assigned as the chief of public affairs for the 477th FG.)

Squadron was activated with 10 B-52s. Now a composite wing, the 917th dropped “Fighter” from its name and became the 917th Wing.

- In 2006, as a result of a base realignment and closure action, the 917th WG gained eight A-10 aircraft and a number of full-time and part-time positions from the closure of Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, bringing the total A-10s assigned to 26.

- On Jan. 1, 2011, the 917th WG was deactivated, and the 917th Operations Group was redesignated as the 917th FG. The group realigned under the 442nd FW at Whiteman AFB, Mo.

The 917th FG included the 917th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 917th Maintenance Squadron, 917th Operations Support Flight and 917th Maintenance Operations Flight.

The final three A-10 Thunderbolt II attack aircraft from the 917th FG, 47th Fighter Squadron, departed Barksdale June 24 for their new home at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

“I salute and say thank you to the Airmen of the 917th FG, past and present, for their impact on our great nation,” Breazeale said. “This unit will be inactivated today, but the triumphs of the 917th will be remembered forever.” (Staff Sgt. Katherine Holt, 2nd Bomb Wing public affairs, Barksdale AFB)

## Civilian Retiree ID Card to be Replaced

Retired Air Force civilians who use the Air Force Form 354, Civilian Identification Card, to access Air Force installations have until early 2014 — when the form will be rescinded — to get a Department of Defense Civilian Retiree ID Card or other access credentials, Air Force Personnel Center officials said.

The AF 354 was a card-stock product that allowed civilian retirees and their eligible dependents to enter an Air Force installation, with installation commander approval, but only for access to limited morale, welfare, and recreation facilities (access that also applies to current Air Force employees and their dependents).

The card was not issued from the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System / Real-time Automated Personnel Identification System and is not recognized by the Department of Defense under the Personnel Identity Protection Program for DEERS or by other services for installation access, said Ed Yoder, Air Force DEERS/RAPIDS project office.

“The card doesn’t meet the stringent security requirements established by the Department of Homeland Security,” Yoder said. “Installation access requires a secure card with identity vetting and online capabilities, such as bar code scanning.”

Although retired civilians can get a DOD identification card, there isn’t an equivalent for eligible dependents.

“On installations where the commander has approved civilian retiree and dependent access, they can contact the civilian personnel office as a starting point for determining eligibility and for getting a secure access card for their family members,” Yoder said.

Many bases use Defense Biometric Identification System cards for all installation access. With a commander approval letter from the force support squadron and a DBIDS card, retired Air Force civilian employees and their

dependents will be able to access an installation.

“Like the 354, the DBIDS card and letter will only be good for the one installation,” Yoder said. “You won’t be able to use it to get on other Air Force or DOD installations.”

Once the AF 354 is officially rescinded, which is tentatively slated for January, installation security will confiscate AF 354 cards presented for access, so civilians should not wait to replace their access cards, he said.

For more information about access credentials and other personnel issues, visit the myPers website and enter “AF 354” in the search window. (Debbie Gildea, Air Force Personnel Center public affairs, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas)

## Reservists Mark 2 Million Hours in Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operations

Active-duty and Reserve members at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., marked a milestone Oct. 22 as the U.S. Air Force’s MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper aircraft accumulated 2 million flight hours.

The Reserve presence in the remotely piloted aircraft program began at Nellis in 2002, and Reservists have been in lock step with their regular Air Force counterparts ever since, flying combat operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“It’s absolutely amazing to witness the growth of not only the program but the Reserve footprint,” said Col. John Breeden, 926th Group commander.

Breeden was the first Reservist to join Predator operations at Nellis and the first to qualify to fly the aircraft. Over the course of a decade, his career evolved from working missile integration and tactics development to overseeing two RPA squadrons operating both the Predator and Reaper.

“Our charge is to augment our RegAF total force partners with sustained expertise at the operational and tactical levels of warfare,” Breeden said. “The Reserve entered the RPA program on the ground floor and provides continuity in training and conducting intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities worldwide.”





The significant demand for sorties resulted in the growth from an initial 10 positions allotted to the Reserve to two squadrons under the 926th Group, responsible for 5 percent of the Air Force's combat air patrols.

Today, the 78th and 91st Attack Squadrons integrate their pilots, sensor operators and intelligence personnel into the RegAF's 432nd Wing/432nd Air Expeditionary Wing and provide 10 percent of the manning for the associated combat squadrons' CAPs.

"This milestone demonstrates how well the Reserve and RegAF integrate on this platform," said Col. Brent Caldwell, deputy group commander for RPA operations.

"The partnership between the 926th Group and 432nd Wing/AEW is a benchmark total force integration model for the Air Force and Air Force Reserve," he said.

In addition to the attack squadrons, the 2nd Special Operations Squadron has contributed more than 35,000 flying hours and 2,300 sorties in the MQ-1 since its stand-up at Nellis in 2008. It is the only Air Force Reserve Command unit flying U.S. Southern Command-owned RPA missions.

"We bring a persistent intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike capability to a customer engaged in the prosecution of this war," said Lt. Col. Randal Russell, 2nd SOS commander.

"I couldn't be prouder of the professionalism of our men and women — they are engaged and doing a phenomenal job supporting our combat operations downrange," Russell said. *(Maj. Jessica Martin, 926th GP public affairs)*

## Last of 'New' F-16s Arrives at 301st Fighter Wing

The last of nine F-16 Fighting Falcons arrived at its new home with the 301st Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, Oct. 8.

The nine aircraft replaced eight older F-16s that were transferred to the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, commonly referred to as the "Boneyard," at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. They came to Fort Worth from the Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing in Atlantic City, N.J. The transfer began with the arrival of the first F-16 July 31.

"These moves help us keep our Air Force's critical F-16 capability here in Fort Worth deep into the next decade," said Brig. Gen. Ronald "Bruce" Miller, the 301st FW's former commander.

The jets arrived with about 10 percent fewer flying hours per airframe than the aircraft they replaced.

"The aircraft we received have an average of 5,700 flying hours; the aircraft that we sent to AMARG averaged almost 6,300 flying hours," said Chief Master Sgt. Scott Jongewaard, 301st



Mike Conner, a contract trainer for a new boom operator weapons system trainer at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., explains the technical aspects of the system to members of the Grissom Community Council.

## Grissom's new high-tech KC-135 boom operator trainer saves time and money

By Tech. Sgt. Mark R.W. Orders-Woempner

Called the "business end" of a KC-135 Stratotanker, the boom pod in the rear of the jet is where aerial refueling takes place, and that business just got a lot more economical at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind.

Base leadership joined with members of the Grissom Community Council, a congressional representative and Airmen in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 27 to officially open a new boom operator weapons system trainer or BOWST.

"This is a unique opportunity for Grissom," said Col. Paul Weimer, 434th Maintenance Group commander.

Grissom, home of the 434th Air Refueling Wing, is the first Air Force Reserve Command base to have one of these trainers, which will allow KC-135 Stratotanker boom operators to conduct vital training in a virtual environment.

Boom operators are an important part of a KC-135's three-person aircrew, as they are responsible for guiding the physical connection between the tanker and the receiver aircraft to transfer fuel during an air refueling mission.

Grissom's BOWST, which cost approximately \$3 million, will provide significant benefits by reducing the required number of flight hours in a KC-135 Stratotanker for boom operators to maintain training and currency, said Gary Beebe, site manager for the contractor that operates and maintains the boom operator trainer as well as Grissom's KC-135 cockpit simulator.

"It's a money-saver, because it costs about \$300 per hour to run the BOWST, and it costs almost \$7,000 an hour to fly the airplane," Beebe said. "It cuts down on the number of flying sorties that it takes to get a boom operator initially qualified."

According to initial Air Force projections, the reduction in flight training will save Grissom an estimated \$3 million per year.

On top of the cost-saving benefits, Grissom's BOWST also allows for enhanced training with emergency procedures and makes it easier for boom operators to train on all types of receivers.

"It allows us to train boom operators in abnormal and emergency processes that we can't safely recreate in the air," Beebe said. "You also don't have to fly to get to a different receiver; just flip a switch and a fighter becomes a C-17."

While Grissom's BOWST is already training boom operators, its capabilities are set to grow and become even more advantageous, he said.

In the near future, the trainer will be connected with the base's cockpit simulator, with inputs in one affecting the other, Beebe said. In the long run, both of Grissom's KC-135 simulators will be able to link with other Air Force simulators around the world, thus allowing for receiver and tanker crews to perform complete aerial refueling operations in a virtual environment. ★

*(Orders-Woempner is assigned to the 434th ARW public affairs office at Grissom ARB.)*

Maintenance Group superintendent.

"Swapping those nine aircraft provides the wing with more than 12 years average per aircraft," Jongewaard said. "Our entire fleet is estimated to last now until the year 2030." *(Master Sgt. Julie Briden-Garcia, 301st FW public affairs)*

## B-52 Training System Goes Online at Barksdale

A new training system that is expected to save the 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., approximately \$6.6 million a year in fuel costs went online at the Claiborne Bombing and Gunnery Range in October.

Called the Joint Threat Emitter, the system will be used to train B-52 electronic warfare officers to protect their crews and aircraft from the threat of a missile attack.

The JTE is a state-of-the-art electronic transmitter that replicates signals that EWOs can detect and jam. The signals simulate those given off by surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery. This training aid allows simulated enemy threats to be countered and crews to put bombs on target.

"Practicing electronic jamming is essential to protection during wartime," said Lt. Col. Robert Vanhoy, 93rd Bomb Squadron director of operations. "If we can jam the enemy's signals, we can prevent them from taking down our aircraft."

Prior to arrival of the new system, the only way EWOs could receive this type of training was by flying to locations in west Texas, central Kansas and Idaho. The Claiborne Bombing and Gunnery Range is located just outside Alexandria, La., only about a 15-minute flight from Barksdale.

Not only does the JTE help B-52s, but it works against all Air Force aircraft that have radar warning receiver capabilities. This includes the C-130 Hercules, B-2 Spirit, B-1 Lancer, F-16 Fighting Falcon, A-10 Thunderbolt II and F-22 Raptor. *(Master Sgt. Greg Steele, 93rd Bomb Squadron)*

## Air Force Implements Changes to PT Assessment

The Air Force released further guidance on the implementation of several changes to the physical assessment test, which took place Oct. 21.

The guidance includes additions to the body composition component of the fitness assessment, delegation of appeal authority for fitness assessments and changes to the walk test.

According to the new policy, those taking only the abdominal circumference component of the fitness assessment will pass with the component minimum score as opposed to the composite 75 score as was previously required. Males must now achieve an abdominal circumference of 39 inches, which is also the component minimum. Females must now achieve an abdominal circumference of 35.5 inches, which is also their component minimum.

Airmen who fail the abdominal circumference, or AC, measurement but score 75 points out of the remaining 80 points on the other components will take the body mass index, or BMI, screen, the policy states. If Airmen do not pass the BMI screen, they will take a body fat assessment, or BFA. If the Airmen pass either the BMI screen or BFA, they pass the body composition component of the fitness assessment.

Additionally, the policy states that to pass the BMI screen, regardless of age or gender, Airmen must achieve a BMI equal to or less than 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. This figure is obtained using the height and weight measurements taken at the beginning of the fitness assessment. To pass the BFA, males must achieve a body fat percentage equal to or less than 18 percent. Females must achieve a body fat percentage equal to or less than 26 percent. These percentages are obtained using the two or three site taping procedures.

The wing commander or equivalent will be the first appeal authority for fitness assessments. This change will expedite the appeals process and put the chain of command back in the appeals process. The second appeal authority will be the Fitness Assessment Advisory Board at Air Force Personnel Center. The final appeal authority is the Air Force Board of Correction of Military Records.

The last clarification that has been made is to the walk test.

In an effort to simplify administration of the walk test, the heart rate measurement will no longer be required. Airmen must now walk two kilometers in a certain amount of time dependent on age and gender. The walk test will be pass or fail. *Staff Sgt. David Salanitri, Air Force Public Affairs Agency, Operating Location-Pentagon) ★*

# It's Your Money

## Save and Invest Based on Your Risk Tolerance

By Ralph Lunt

I recently met with individual investors as an employer-paid consultant and adviser to a company-sponsored 401(k), which is very similar to our military Thrift Savings Plan. I have worked for this client for roughly 12 years, during which I have seen many stock market highs and lows.

During my recent meeting, I reinforced the fact that each employee should always be comfortable with the percentage of money he or she has "at risk." The goal of my approach is to prevent employees from moving money out of the market when the next downturn occurs. Yes, I did say "when" the next downturn occurs, not "if."

As I write this, the Standard and Poor's index and the Dow Jones Industrial Average are at all-time highs. Times are good if you have been investing over the past three years. That said, I'd ask that you take a look at your investing goals or retirement plans and confirm that your money is aligned with both.

It's not that historically we haven't had good and bad markets; it's whether you, as an investor, via the money you have put into the TSP, a 401(k) or mutual funds, have experienced same and acted in your best interests. If your investments were cut in half, on paper, what would you do? If your answer is "nothing," you are exactly where you need to be. If you'd sell out and move your assets to cash, the time to reallocate is now.

Simply put, the stock market is fluid. Don't panic, but be ready for adjustments.

In my recent meetings, I told everyone that the biggest mistake I have seen investors make is, during a downturn, they move out of the market into cash. Locking in your losses by selling out of your investments will not help you reach your retirement goals.

You will be best served to save and invest based upon your risk tolerance. Investing is a long jog versus a sprint. Know your limits and adjust accordingly.

Fly safe! ★

*(Editor's note: This feature is designed to provide financial advice and information of a general nature. Individuals should conduct their own research and consult a financial adviser before making any financial decisions. Based in Cleveland, Ohio, Lunt is a certified financial planner and vice president of a financial planning and consulting firm. He is also a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, serving as the reserve forces director of the Great Lakes Region of the Civil Air Patrol adviser's program.)*





From Sierra Leone to the Air Force Reserve



Fleeing civil war, Wesley and his family left Sierra Leone in a fishing vessel similar to this one. Following their cramped passage on the *Salvage Sea*, they eventually ended up in the United States.

# A Life's Journey

**Immigrant gives back to adopted country through his military service**

By Gene Van Deventer

In May 1997, a young man was quietly ironing his clothes, getting ready for church in his hometown of Freetown, Sierra Leone. The country was in the sixth year of an 11-year civil war, and as Bernard Wesley looked out his living room window, he saw soldiers with red bandanas tied securely around their foreheads in pickup trucks driving around the city and shooting randomly.

"This was the second coup d'état in Sierra Leone, my native land, within five years," Wesley said. "As armed militia rebels

entered the city, I saw many who looked ragged, for they had been fighting in the countryside for months. ... some of them looked to be children."

The arrival of militia rebels signaled the beginning of a long journey for the 23-year-old Wesley, and his family, that would eventually take him to a career as a civil engineer in the Air Force Reserve.

Wesley was well aware of the strong possibility of being forcibly drafted (kidnapped) into the rebel army or risk being killed along with his family. The rebels actively searched for young children to join the ranks of their ragtag militia. ... "child soldiers" as they came to be known. They supported their quest for arms and ammunition by selling or bartering "blood" or "conflict diamonds" — precious stones often mined within their country by forced laborers at gunpoint.

Faced with such a dire future, Wesley's family decided to leave their hometown and country with whatever they could carry and to do so as quickly as possible.

Westerners were being evacuated from Freetown. Bernard's mother and family head, the Rev. Olivia Wesley, made plans for her family to depart the capital and Sierra Leone in order to protect her children. Bernard's father had just passed away three months prior. She collected the \$1,000 fee for the family of four to gain passage on a fishing vessel called the "Salvage Sea" that was leaving for Gambia, located to the north above Guinea and Senegal.

Under cover of darkness, the passenger-packed *Salvage Sea* slowly chugged along, headed far out to sea from the African coastline to avoid both recognition and an angry, unexpected storm that was churning up the Atlantic Ocean. Because of the ship's circuitous course, a trip that normally took two days turned into a desperate seven-day ordeal with food and water provisions having to be stringently dispensed to keep everyone alive. Seemingly overnight, the Wesleys found themselves as desperate refugees.

Through Olivia's church connections in Gambia, the family received shelter and comfort while they began the very long

Capt. Bernard Wesley planned on joining the Navy until he talked to an Air Force Reserve recruiter in Atlanta. Within a week, he interviewed for a job within the 628th Civil Engineer Flight, now the 622nd CEF, at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., and was accepted into the unit. He is currently an individual mobilization augmentee assigned to the 23rd Civil Engineer Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Ga. (Bo Joyner)



A young Wesley during happier times in Sierra Leone. The country would eventually be rocked by an 11-year civil war.





and laborious process of preparing United Nations paperwork seeking asylum to any country that would have them. After lengthy interviews and information validation, and much prayer, the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service granted permission for the family of four to come to America.

The family's long trek to the United States began with a flight from Gambia to the Netherlands. From there, they traveled to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City. Eventually, they boarded a plane at LaGuardia International Airport bound for Buffalo, N.Y. Upon the family's arrival in Buffalo, Olivia received support and sponsorship from Trinity United Methodist Church via Church World Service.

"We were so fortunate the United States INS approved our petition to immigrate here," Wesley said. "I saw firsthand the power that soldiers had, regardless of their age, as they toted their weapons and took control, mostly by fear and intimidation. I promised myself there on the fishing boat headed to Gambia that I would never let that happen to me or my family again.

"So, with less than a year in America, despite my mother's concerns, I enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. I guess my reasons for joining were two-fold: to be a professional soldier while at the same time giving something back to my new, adopted country.

"My goal the first day I joined the Marines was to become an American citizen and rise within the ranks as an officer," Wesley said. "Through devoted studies, I became a U.S. citizen in August 2004. Almost immediately I started weighing my options on which branch of the military to serve in and to achieve my developmental goals. I thought how I could best use my degree as a civil engineer."

Wesley successfully completed his enlistment in the Marine Corp Reserve, earning an honorable discharge, while concurrently obtaining a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He joined the Air Force Reserve as a civil engineer officer and currently serves as an individual mobilization augmentee. In addition, he later earned a master's degree in business administration from Trident University.

"I considered joining the Navy until on a fitness trip to Naval Air Station Atlanta, Ga., in the summer of 2006, where I met an Air Force Reservist who advised me to talk to an Air Force recruiter. Within the week, my recruiter scheduled an interview for me with the commander of the 628th Civil Engineer Flight (now the 622nd CEF) at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga. Col. Theron Stancil (U.S.



Having been in America for less than a year, Wesley enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He said his goal was to become a U.S. citizen and rise within the ranks as an officer.

Air Force Reserve retired) interviewed me and accepted my application to join the unit.

"On Aug. 5, 2006, I reported to the Academy of Military Science, McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tenn., and was commissioned a second lieutenant on Sept. 14, 2006. I currently serve as an IMA to the operations officer, 23rd Civil Engineer Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

"At Moody, I have been working hard on a Reserve plan for IMAs at the operational level at the 23rd CES. The plan's goal is to help new and future 23rd CES commanders identify their Reserve resources, understand their operations and administrative control interactions with the Reservists, and, at the same time, help incoming IMAs integrate faster within the squadron.

"Who would have thought our 1997 ocean journey into the unknown would land us where we are today?" Wesley said. "For me, the Air Force Reserve has provided unique educational and leadership opportunities. The Reserve family

has always been there to help me. Many fine Airmen (military and civilian) come to mind, Airmen who provided me with genuine mentorship and guidance along the way.

"In 2008, as a first lieutenant in the Reserve, I deployed on a six-month tour to Balad Air Base, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. What a grand opportunity for me to serve in my civil engineer capacity working alongside America's finest in uniform. There is something special about the camaraderie and friendships gained when working at the 'tip of the spear.'

"I remember well my fellow Airmen's caring attitudes, and I've been 'paying it forward' in all I do now as a new American. I am proud to give back to the country that has given so much to my family, and I feel privileged to be serving in the best Air Force in the world.

"Today, I can recall vividly the roughness of the waves slapping against the fishing trawler's bow, the deep feeling of uncertainty and the intense fear of the great unknown," he said. "Along with that fear, however, came the glorious feeling of optimism. ... perhaps a better life for me and my family awaited us, somewhere. That grimy and cramped vessel that carried us to a new beginning was aptly named. For not only were we 'rescued' from the tyranny that beset us, we were 'salvaged' to become something even greater than what we once were." ★

*(A frequent contributor to Citizen Airman magazine, Van Deventer is assigned to the Expeditionary Combat Support Division of the Installation and Mission Support Directorate at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. Capt Wesley resides in the Greater Atlanta area with his wife and two young daughters.)*



In his job as Reserve liaison to Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody, Senior Master Sgt. Paul Rayman Jr. is responsible for advising his boss on all issues pertaining to the 56,000 Air Force Reserve enlisted members.

# Caring for Airmen

**New Reserve liaison position helps Air Force look after its enlisted force**

By Bo Joyner

Senior Master Sgt. Paul Rayman Jr. loves his new job. As the Reserve liaison to Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody, Rayman's primary responsibility is to advise the CMSAF on all issues pertaining to the 56,000 Air Force Reserve enlisted members.

"I am constantly in awe of the truly amazing things my fellow Reservists accomplish on a daily basis to continue to serve the best Air Force in the world," Rayman said. "It is a privilege for me to share our Citizen Airmen's stories with the chief master sergeant of the Air Force."

Rayman began his job in June. He is the first person to serve in this new position.

To fulfill his responsibilities to both Reserve Airmen and Cody, Rayman coordinates with Air Force Reserve Command's command chief master sergeant, Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, as well as other Reserve command chiefs and key Reserve enlisted members on issues requiring Cody's attention.

"Equipped with that information, I attend Air Force headquarters meetings with the CMSAF to provide an Air Force Reserve perspective so our leaders can consider the impact of their decisions on our Reserve Airmen," Rayman said.

"One of the biggest items we worked on recently was quantifying and minimizing the effects of the government shutdown on our traditional Reservists and dual status technicians throughout the Air Force."

Rayman also helps facilitate Cody's base and site visits to Air Force Reservists around the world.

"CMSAF Cody is extremely impressed with our Citizen

Airmen and how well they accomplish their Air Force missions while effectively balancing their civilian careers and family," Rayman said.

As part of the chief master sergeant of the Air Force's total force team, Rayman helps analyze, review and manage issues covering the full spectrum of enlisted Air Force issues.

"Some of the issues we have worked and continue to work in my short time on the CMSAF's team include Air Force fitness assessments, enlisted performance reports and developmental special duties, all areas that affect our Reserve Airmen differently than our active-duty teammates," he said.

"His perspective and experience is invaluable" said Cody, "and his influence reaches further than the Reserve. What he does every day produces a ripple effect that reaches across the entire Air Force — all 690,000 Airmen. He makes sure everybody understands each other and that we're all working from the same sheet of music. When we work as one, we're always stronger."

Rayman is extremely busy in his new job, but he always keeps his focus on the big picture.

"My most important role is to help CMSAF Cody, Chief Kirksey and the other major command command chiefs care for our Airmen — active, Guard and Reserve — and their families however I can," he said. "In the short time since my arrival, I've assisted CMSAF Cody during Wounded Warrior visits. I was also able to help resolve pay issues for one of our very own Reserve Wounded Warriors. In this office, we are one team, and collectively we help CMSAF Cody care for all 690,000 Airmen in our United States Air Force." ★



# Relying on Good Wingmen Is Not a Sign of Weakness

*(Editor's note: This is the final installment in a four-part series of articles defining and outlining the importance of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, resilience, and the wingman initiative, written from the personal perspective of a rape victim. In addition to serving as a victim's advocate and being a civilian employee in the 301st Fighter Wing public affairs office at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, Dermarderosiansmith is also a member of the Air Force Reserve.)*

I was independent, self-sufficient and didn't need anyone. Then I was raped.

When I made a phone call to my friend immediately after calling the police that night, it was because I didn't know what else to do. I was afraid, alone and uncertain of what I was supposed to feel. I needed my friends, but I didn't realize, until days later, how much I also needed my co-workers.

In their own way, they each looked out for me. Some people went out of their way to walk down the hall to say hello, a gesture that let me know they were thinking of me. My friends were always close by, knowing when I needed to laugh, when I needed to be alone without being by myself and when I needed their subtle words of encouragement. In Air Force terms, these people were my wingmen.

Initially, the Air Force heavily promoted the wingman concept as a key component of its suicide prevention efforts. Being a wingman challenges every Airman, including Air Force civilians, to look for signs of stress in our fellow Airmen and intervene when necessary.

The Air Force Reserve Wingman Toolkit and the Advanced Distributed Learning Service's Suicide Prevention course provide guidance on identifying the warning signs and risk factors as well as information on how to help.

Over the past few years, however, senior leaders have broadened the wingman concept to challenge Airmen to look out for each other all the time. The people who watched out for me were making sure I didn't become self-destructive or despondent.

There were times when I was edgy or emotionally explosive — so I was told — and that's when my friends urged me to take a break. Sometimes those breaks consisted of telling jokes or discussing plans for the weekend. They were trying to find out what was wrong in order to help me get my emotions back in check.

I know my lack of sleep contributed to this emotional roller coaster. In the month after the attack, I couldn't shake

the fear I felt at night. During the day, with the protection of my friends, I felt empowered to face my fears and work through my issues. At night, however, every noise and any moving shadow outside my window or reflected inside my room brought surges of panic. Every time I fell asleep, the slightest noise would wake me up.

I was so tired, but taking drugs to sleep was not an option. I believed that if I took them I wouldn't be able to protect myself if there was another break-in. The only way I felt secure enough to fall asleep was to have people spend the night. It didn't matter that I had purchased a gun or that my landlord installed bars on all the windows and sliding glass doors. I was still afraid and needed to know there was someone standing watch. Friends and co-workers came to my rescue; even my friend's teenage children and their friends spent nights sleeping over.

I can still remember the first night I tried to stay by myself. It was getting late, and I was beyond tired but slightly awake. I heard a slight noise, and along with my heart, I immediately jumped to the window. When I looked out, I saw a quick-moving shadow. I was so scared I immediately dropped to the floor beside the bed and stayed there for at least five minutes.

I debated calling the police because I felt ridiculous bothering them for something that wasn't an emergency. Eventually, I did call. I told the dispatcher that I was embarrassed for calling and explained that I was raped in my home two weeks prior and was frightened. Within minutes, an officer was looking around outside. I also noticed that he kindly remained parked outside my front door in his cruiser for at least a half-hour.

In time, I overcame my fear and was so grateful to those who stayed with me. I can't emphasize how important these wingmen were to me. As difficult as it was to ask for help, let alone accept help, I came to learn that relying on others is not a sign of weakness or an imposition.

This experience made me think back to when I moved 1,500 miles away from home to a location where I didn't know the area or a single person. I can't imagine how I would have dealt with the rape then.

I began to wonder about all the single people who are new to the area in and around Fort Worth who join our unit. Who would they turn to for help? I hope I've become perceptive enough to know when anyone around me needs a friend. I also hope I give the perception that I'm approachable and willing to be there for them when they're ready.

For me, being a good wingman isn't about just watching out for those who are closest to me. It's about ensuring I also promote a culture of mutual respect.

A few years ago, the Air Force adapted this approach to bring awareness to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program by teaching bystander intervention. Bystander intervention empowers Airmen to foster an environment that protects each other from inappropriate sexual behavior, as well as unprofessional and offensive practices. It also teaches techniques to help prevent a situation that provides a potential perpetrator the opportunity to commit sexual assault. If we come together as a wing, group, squadron or flight to fight in a battlefield, should it be that hard to come together to help prevent sexual assaults?

When I facilitated the bystander intervention training, I would ask the group to think of the course scenarios by asking themselves: "What would you do? How would you want someone to assist you in this situation?" What the training taught was there's always a way to intervene, to be a good wingman, without putting yourself in harm's way.

I titled this series of articles "My Story, My Perspective" because my experience gave me a personal insight into the importance of comprehensive Airman fitness, SAPR and wingman initiatives. I want people to see the personal side of these crimes to understand that bad things can happen to people we know and to see how this one incident affected one person.

We all differ in how we think, feel and react to situations. I believe our upbringing, our environment and our experiences influence our actions. For example, my reaction to the rape probably didn't seem logical to those around me. Some may have thought I was only attacked, not sexually assaulted, because of how I behaved afterward.

We all have different triggers brought on by our experiences. We don't know what goes through another person's thoughts, and so I caution everyone to not judge someone's sexual assault complaint, their inability to ward off unwanted sexual advances, or give the impression they have no issues with inappropriate sexual behavior because they don't act or react the way we think they should.

I'm still a work in progress, but I try

hard not to judge other people in these instances. I don't want to ignore a situation where I see a fellow Airman being harassed, for example, just because that Airman is not doing anything about it. That Airman may want it to stop but doesn't know how to make that happen. That Airman's inaction might be perceived as accepting the unwanted attention, but I would hope I'm sensitive enough to the situation to be a wingman and ask.

We all have choices in our lives: We can choose to be vigilant; we can choose to be resilient; and we can choose to be a wingman. What do you choose? ★





# The 1960s

## For the Air Reserve Personnel Center, it was a decade of mobilizations

By Mark Nelson

*(Editor's note: To celebrate its 60th anniversary, the Air Reserve Personnel Center at Buckley Air Force Base, Colo., will host a reunion Feb. 28 for all former and current employees.*

*For information and to RSVP for the event, contact Erline Rohan at 720-847-3016.)*

People remember the 1960s for different reasons, from President John F. Kennedy to the Beatles to Woodstock to the landing on the moon. For the Air Reserve Personnel Center, it was a decade of mobilizations.

Officials at the center executed four mobilizations, more than any decade before or since. These mobilizations were the Berlin Crisis of 1961, the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the *USS Pueblo* incident of 1968 and the escalation of the war in Southeast Asia in 1968.

The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States was going strong during those years. In 1961, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threatened to sign a unilateral peace treaty with East Germany and declared that he would not recognize any American rights in the city. To protect West Berlin and stand up to Soviet threats, Kennedy ordered a gradual military response to the crisis that July.

In a televised address, the president asked for mobilization authority, an increase in the military draft and supplemental military appropriations. He also disclosed his intent to mobilize members of Air Force Reserve air transport units and Air National Guard fighter squadrons. Congress approved the president's requests, and the crisis escalated when Soviets sealed the border between East and West Berlin and began construction of the infamous Berlin Wall.

Within two weeks, the Air Reserve Records Center, as it was known back then, became the focal point of the mobilization effort. A

**(Top)** Col. Leland A. Walker Jr., the longest-serving Air Reserve Personnel Center commander, consults with a staff member in the computer room at the York Street building in Denver during a 1968 mobilization.

**(Middle)** Members of the Air Reserve Records Center provide personnel support at the York Street building.

**(Bottom)** A new sign is featured over the Air Reserve Personnel Center entrance at the York Street building in 1966. Air Force leaders recognized that the Air Reserve Records Center was not merely a records repository but that it was involved in all aspects of reserve force management. For that reason, ARRC was redesignated as the Air Reserve Personnel Center on Sept. 1, 1965.

team screened personnel records from 31 ANG flying units and 16 ANG support units as well as five Reserve flying units. Center officials executed mobilizations for more than 18,000 people for service during the Berlin Crisis.

A year later, an even greater threat materialized in Cuba. In October 1962, an Air Force U-2 reconnaissance aircraft brought back photographic evidence of ballistic missile bases in Cuba, and the Kennedy administration was forced to consider all military options to prevent a nuclear war.

The Cuban crisis had been brewing since the fall of 1959, when Fidel Castro, a socialist-turned communist, overthrew the government of Cuba. He quickly moved his country closer toward the Soviet Union, and in April 1961, Kennedy supported a poorly planned invasion of Cuba by a small force of exiles at the Bay of Pigs. An expected uprising against Castro never materialized, and the invasion failed.

Castro sought Soviet help in preventing future American attacks on his regime, and in September 1962, the Soviet Union announced a treaty with Cuba. The Soviets agreed to provide defensive weaponry and technicians to protect Cuban sovereignty. Furthermore, Castro and Khrushchev secretly agreed to place Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba.

On Oct. 22, Kennedy demanded removal of these missiles and ordered a naval quarantine of Cuba. He directed all branches of the U.S. military to prepare for any contingency and launched a mobilization of reserve forces.

ARRC mobilization activities included preparing special reserve status reports, identifying all recall-eligible personnel and delivering personnel records to air commands. The secretary of defense ordered 24 Air Force Reserve troop carrier squadrons, one C-123 wing, seven C-119 wings and six aerial port squadrons to active duty. ARRC staff members executed mobilizations for more than 14,000 Reserve members from 238 units utilizing 422 Reserve aircraft to meet the crisis.

Fortunately, diplomatic pressure forced Khrushchev to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba, and the crisis came to an end. The last mobilized members were released from active duty in December 1962.

Because the center had performed yeoman work in the face of these mobilizations, Air Force leaders recognized that ARRC was not merely a records repository. It was involved in all aspects of reserve force management. For that reason, ARRC was redesignated as the Air Reserve Personnel Center on Sept. 1, 1965.

As the 1960s wore on, worldwide tensions remained constant. On Jan. 23, 1968, the American intelligence-gathering ship *USS Pueblo* was conducting a mission in international waters off North Korea's east coast. The vessel came under attack by North Korean naval forces, whose crews alleged the ship was in North Korean territorial waters.

The Koreans captured the ship and 83 crew members. Two

days later, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered 15,000 Air Force and Navy reservists to active duty as a precautionary measure.

As a result, ARPC officials pulled master personnel records on nearly 4,900 reservists and 9,400 guardsmen and mailed them to the U.S. Air Force Military Personnel Center. As a result, 14,220 people were mobilized.

In addition, the ARPC staff updated its volunteer file and answered inquiries from Headquarters U.S. Air Force, major air commands and the National Guard Bureau throughout the mobilization process. The North Koreans released the *Pueblo's* crew almost one year later, in December 1968.

The same week the *USS Pueblo* was captured, a massive communist offensive began in South Vietnam. The Tet Offensive, launched during a Vietnamese religious holiday, was a surprise to American and South Vietnamese forces. Even though communist forces suffered devastating casualties, the offensive forced the president to rethink his previous opposition to mobilizing reserve forces for Vietnam service.

On April 11, the secretary of defense announced a call-up of about 24,500 reserve members for all service branches. The Air Force's portion of the call-up was small; ARPC officials processed 776 Air Force Reserve and 1,295 ANG members. By early 1969, mobilized members were released from active duty.

During the decade of the 1960s, ARPC leaders refined the center's internal organization and management structure, employing lessons learned from each mobilization to make the organization more efficient. In the mid-1960s, ARPC officials conducted mobilization exercises on a regular basis to refine procedures and develop new ones.

One example of refining processes was switching to Social Security account numbers. The center had used the terminal digit sequence of the Air Force serial number since 1958, but in 1967, the Defense Department switched to SSANs. The center launched the change in late 1968, a huge undertaking that affected every personnel record.

The project served as a data cleanup since errors in service numbers, conflicting SSANs and other issues were uncovered. After numbers were converted, all records were refiled using the SSAN terminal digit sequence. The project was completed by July 1969. For the staff, the project was difficult, time-consuming and even frustrating, but it has stood the test of time as ARPC uses the SSAN terminal digit filing system to this day.

ARPC was tested during four real-world contingencies throughout the tumultuous 1960s and in each one performed brilliantly. Each mobilization was used as a learning opportunity to better prepare for the future, and members of ARPC demonstrated a proactive, positive response to every challenge. As the 1960s ended, ARPC accepted new challenges as it stood ready to move ahead into the total force concept. ★

*(Nelson is the ARPC historian)*



# Innovative Readiness Training

**CE troops get experience while building community partnerships**

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Chance Babin

One of the challenges leaders within the Air Force Reserve Command civil engineer community face is how to get valuable practical training for their troops once they complete their initial technical school.

A program that helps solve this problem, while also providing hands-on upgrade training and helping civil engineers maintain skills throughout their career, is innovative readiness training.

"One of the difficult things that commanders have to deal with is how do we get our guys hands-on training," said Lt. Col. Brady Johnson, 514th Civil Engineer Squadron commander at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. "We just don't have that capability in the unit to do a lot of things that an IRT project provides. From a leadership perspective, the (IRT) training is invaluable."

IRT has an added benefit. In addition to providing real-world training opportunities and preparing reservists from the Army and Navy, as well as the Air Force, for their wartime missions, projects support communities with significant needs but limited resources.

"Congress funded IRT through OSD (the Office of the Secretary of Defense) to the tune of about \$20 million this year," said Col. Damon Feltman of the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. "With that \$20 million, we worked with the reserve components and local communities across the nation to find projects that provided benefits to these communities and training opportunities to service members that they might not otherwise receive."

IRT projects are conducted within the 50 states as well as U.S. territories. In the last seven years, Congress, through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, has allotted more than \$1 million a year to IRT projects within AFRC. Those funds were used in conjunction with contributions from the civilian communities to complete the projects. AFRC provides manpower resources primarily through annual tours.

"Our unit commanders utilize their AT funds while all other funding comes from the civilian community and Congress," said Chief Master Sgt. Shawn Sexton, deputy chief of the AFRC IRT program. "IRT supplies the funding for duration staff, tools and heavy equipment. A3 (the Air, Space & Information Operations Directorate) secures airlift to get our personnel and their gear to the project location. The community provides all designs and construction materials. All of this combined allows commanders to have an outstanding training opportunity at a fraction of the cost."

In fiscal year 2013, funding for AFRC civil engineer IRT projects totaled \$1.7 million. Twenty-two units participated in the program, with 429 Reservists being trained and 8,798 upgrade training tasks being signed off.

AFRC units conducted three IRT projects: building a fixed-base

operations building and a 10-bay aircraft hangar at Fletcher Field in Clarksdale, Miss.; building a pair of cabins at Camp Mohawk County Park in Alvin, Texas; and completing a soccer field at Riverside Christian Academy in Fayetteville, Tenn.

For the CE Reservists participating in an IRT project, getting the chance to train together with people from other units, while gaining AFSC (Air Force specialty code) training, is a major benefit.

"The training is specific to their AFSCs," said Senior Master Sgt. Todd Jones of the 514th CES at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Jones served as project manager for the Clarksdale project. "Each unit will send a mix of all their AFSCs. They all get the opportunity to hone their skills on sight during their two-week tour."

For the Reservists participating in an IRT project, receiving valuable training is the ultimate goal.

"The No. 1 priority is the training in their career fields. Being CE and heavy equipment, we don't have the luxury of learning our craft in a technical manual like the other shops," said Senior Master Sgt. Glenn Matthijs of the 514th CES, who served as project manager for the Fayetteville project. "To be a good heavy-equipment operator and be proficient at your skill, you have to get behind the controls of your equipment. And as every drilling Reservist knows, you just don't have those opportunities on UTAs (unit training assemblies). We don't have those resources at our units, so we have to find creative ways to train our people."

For traditional Reservists, it's rare to get behind the wheel of a piece of heavy machinery or to have a building project during drill weekends. IRT projects allow them to take their online studies and put them to use on a real project.

"It's enhanced my career progression by exposing me to equipment that I otherwise only get to see during computer-based training," said Tech. Sgt. Paul Torres, 439th CES, Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass. "Typically, we don't get to see this equipment on a Reserve weekend."

Ultimately, Reserve civil engineers need the training to maintain their skill level and to be prepared to deploy to an area of responsibility.

"These Reservists who participate in IRT projects are developing the necessary skills for them to not only work in the Air Force stateside, but the skills needed to take downrange to the AOR, which may be the only place they see construction on such a heavy scale as these IRT projects," Matthijs said. "So we are developing them to face those challenges when they do deploy downrange."

For the three- or five-level troops, getting the opportunity to put their training to use on an actual project and do the job they were trained to do both enhances their skills and helps them with upgrade training.

Master Sgt. Dexter Hodge, 307th Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., digs a trench using a backhoe, preparing to lay down a power line at Camp Mohawk in Alvin, Texas, as part of an Innovative Readiness Training mission. The IRT team built two cabins and a basketball court at the location.



“My upgrade training has been amazing. I have gone through everything I needed to, and the hands-on work has helped me with my CDCs (career development courses), because I’m doing the work as well as doing it on paper,” said Airman First Class Stephan Dacosta of the 439th CES. “Getting to do the work while taking CDCs helps because when I’m answering a question, I can just think about what I would actually do on the job.”

Each of the Reservists’ actions are charted throughout the IRT project, helping with unit readiness and getting the Airmen up to date on training requirements.

“While Reservists are participating in an IRT (project), their training records are documented and updated throughout the tour,” Sexton said. “In order to improve tracking of upgrade and proficiency training, we have developed a process of tracking the individual tasks accomplished by each Airman throughout the duration of the project.

“At the end of each project, we compile all of the data into two formats. One format is geared toward commanders and allows us to provide them with a report that lists each unit member and the tasks they completed. The second format of the report is up-channeled to OSD in an annual project after-action report. This data is critical, as it allows OSD the opportunity to provide members of Congress with tangible training data they rely on for next year’s funding.”

IRT projects provide senior leaders with the opportunity to share their knowledge with the next generation of Reserve CE Airmen.

“It’s rewarding for me to pass down my 32 years of experience as a heavy-equipment operator,” Matthijs said. “So if there is any way I can pass it down to them and they can apply it toward what they do, then I’ve done my job, and it validates what I do.”

For the younger troops, having the opportunity to soak up the experience of seasoned professionals is a valuable learning tool.

“The mentoring is at its peak right now because everybody who is higher than me has showed me their leadership skills as well as their skills in what I’m doing,” Dacosta said. “They’ll stop me right where I am when I’m doing something wrong and say, ‘This is how we go about it, and this is how to make yourself better.’ I think the leadership is right where it should be. I was with the chief (Sexton) at one point, and he was telling me how to perform a task that I wasn’t really good at. And to have the chief performing it with me was just amazing.”



**Chief Master Sgt. Shawn Sexton (left), deputy chief of the Air Force Reserve Command IRT program, and Airman First Class Stephan Dacosta of the 439th Civil Engineer Squadron, Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., go over a sight layout plan while performing an IRT project at Riverside Christian Academy in Tennessee.**



**Senior Airman Aaron Ealum, 556th RED HORSE, Hurlburt Field, Fla., uses a level to set the forms for a concrete pour at Camp Mohawk.**

While training is the No. 1 goal for Reservists, IRTs also have a broader impact.

“A secondary benefit of the IRT program is that it brings the military into smaller communities,” said Feltman during a visit to the Clarksdale location. “You hear statistics these days that less than 1 percent of the American population serves in the military, and over the last 20 years or so, the military presence in terms of bases and National Guard and Reserve units across the country has drawn down. So what IRT does by coming into these smaller communities is put a familiar face on the military, so it’s not just an abstract organization that’s somewhere else in the country. It’s local, and it shows that this capacity the U.S. taxpayer has bought not only defends the country and not only helps partner nations, but it also helps partner communities across the country as well.”

The Reservists’ labors don’t go unnoticed by the communities receiving the work.

“We’re extremely thankful for this, the third year that the Air Force Reserve has been here, and the tremendous amount of work that has been done,” said James Bryant, head of school at Riverside Christian Academy. “The degree of detail and professionalism that has been carried out far exceeds any expectations we have had. The finished product after these three years will service these students for decades to come. We’re so thankful for the help these Air Force Reservists have provided in improving our infrastructure here.” ★

*(Babin is assigned to the Headquarters AFRC public affairs office at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.)*

# Joint Education

## National Defense University offers opportunities for officers and enlisted

In today’s complex global military environment, joint experience is absolutely essential for providing Air Force Reserve enlisted members and officers with the comprehensive knowledge, broad perspective and critical thinking skills necessary to serve in leadership positions.

And with more and more Reservists seeking out deployments in a joint environment, volunteering for joint assignments or getting involved in joint exercises to gain that all-important experience, joint professional military education is becoming increasingly important as a way to prepare Airmen for the challenges these opportunities present.

Senior leaders throughout the military, from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on down, all agree that joint PME plays a pivotal role in developing the talents and abilities of leaders at every level to maximize their individual potential, build effective units and optimize their contributions to the joint fight.

A key source for joint PME that might not be familiar to a lot of Reservists is the Joint Forces Staff College at National Defense University. Located in Norfolk, Va., JFSC is dedicated to educating national security professionals in planning and executing joint operations.

The college has a distance education school that offers two programs — Advance Joint Professional Military Education and Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education — that are designed to meet the needs of Reservists who often have a difficult time getting away from their civilian jobs and family responsibilities long enough to attend in-residence educational opportunities.

AJPME was specifically developed to provide reserve component officers with a means to meet joint PME requirements. Civilians, international officers and senior enlisted members from the active duty and reserve components are also eligible to enroll in the program.

According to Lt. Col. Tricia York, a member of the faculty, the program is designed to provide students with an opportunity to experience planning and operational challenges that a staff officer or interagency partner can anticipate encountering during a joint duty assignment, whether the assignment is on the Joint Staff, a joint task force or service component staff.

AJPME is 40 weeks of blended learning: 37 weeks online and three weeks in residence at JFSC or a designated hosting site. The course is faculty led, and the online portion uses multimedia instruction, case studies and group collaboration. The in-residence portion comprises typical classroom instruction, war gaming and site visits.



Since the 2003-2004 academic year, a total of 1,889 students have completed AJPME. Of those graduates, 340 have been members of the Air Force Reserve.

In addition to AJPME, the Joint Forces Staff College offers the Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education program. John Lipps, program manager, said the mission of SEJPME is to use advanced distributed learning practices and principles to educate and prepare joint war fighters from the enlisted force assigned to joint organizations to successfully support activities and supervise multiple service members.

“The curriculum is designed to instill in these war fighters a primary

commitment to joint, multinational and interagency teamwork, attitudes and perspectives so they may confidently and competently assimilate more quickly, effectively contribute in joint assignments, and mentor junior enlisted leaders and the other enlisted personnel they supervise,” Lipps said.

The program, which is completely Web-based and uses multimedia instruction, comprises 10 modules of instruction. Students go through the modules at their own pace and may focus on areas that meet their individual learning needs or interests. Lipps said it takes at least 45 hours to complete the entire curriculum.

“The course contains a pre-test, section knowledge checks or quizzes and a final examination,” he said. “The lessons vary in topic areas ranging from the national military command structure, interagency operations and multinational operations to service roles and missions, to name a few.”

Today’s complex global operating environment requires a solid network of senior enlisted leaders who can communicate with each other to accomplish the mission, share ideas, learn lessons from one another and much more, Lipps said.

“Our SEJPME course can lay the educational groundwork for operating in this environment,” he said.

Since the SEJPME program began in June 2007, almost 54,000 students have earned completion certificates. Of the 29,294 Air Force graduates, 3,629 have been members of the Air Force Reserve.

For more information on these two courses, visit the JFSC website at <http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/> and scroll over the “Schools and Academic Programs” link on the left-hand side of the page. ★

*(From staff reports. Some information for this article taken from a story written by Rebecca Coleman of Joint Staff Hampton Roads in Norfolk.)*





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